

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 186079
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 SS-15 SP-02
/040 R

DRAFTED BY EUR;SOV;SMBYRNES:REH
APPROVED BY EUR;SOV;WTSHINN
EUR;SOV - LWILLEMS
EUR;SOV;MJWILKINSON

-----037344 241523Z /44

R 241457Z JUL 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW

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FOR KAP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SGEN, SHUM, UR, US, OTRA (SMYTH, WALTER AND HARASCTI, ALEXANDER

SUBJECT: TRAVEL TO MOSCOW OF BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE
REPRESENTATIVES

1. DR. JOHN AKERS OF BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE ADVISED DEPART-
MENT JULY 20 THAT TWO CRUSADE REPRESENTATIVES, DR. WALTER
SMYTH AND DR. ALEXANDER HARASCTI, WILL VISIT THE USSR
JULY 29-AUGUST 7. SMYTH AND HARASCTI PLAN TO ARRIVE IN
MOSCOW JULY 29 FOLLOWING A WEEK-LONG VISIT TO POLAND.
DURING THEIR VISIT TO MOSCOW, SMYTH AND HARASCTI WILL MEET
WITH ALEKSEY BYCHKOV, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE ALL-UNION
EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANS-BAPTISTS OF THE USSR. BYCHKOV IS
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REPORTEDLY TRYING TO ARRANGE MEETINGS WITH OFFICIALS OF
THE COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS AS WELL. SMYTH AND
HARASCTI WILL VISIT LENINGRAD AUGUST 3-4 AND KIEV
AUGUST 5-6. THEY HAVE NO PLANS TO MAKE CALLS ON SOVIET
RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN EITHER CITY.

2. AKERS STRESSED THAT CRUSADE SEEKS TO KEEP THIS VISIT AS

LOW-KEY AS POSSIBLE AND IS SEEKING NO PUBLICITY. PURPOSE
OF CRUSADE REPRESENTATIVES' TRIP IS TO EXPLORE POSSIBILITY
OF A SOVIET VISIT BY BILLY GRAHAM SIMILAR TO THAT WHICH TOOK
PLACE IN HUNGARY IN 1977 AND WHICH IS SCHEDULED FOR POLAND

IN OCTOBER. AKERS VOLUNTEERED THAT CRUSADE REPRESENTATIVES
WOULD LIKE TO VISIT THE EMBASSY TO SUMMARIZE AND DISCUSS
RESULTS OF THEIR MEETINGS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS. DEPART-
MENT PROVIDED EMBASSY PHONE NUMBERS -- AS WELL AS THOSE
FOR CONGEN LENINGRAD AND KAP OFFICES -- AND SUGGESTED
THAT SMYTH AND HARASCTI CONTACT EMBOFF BENJAMIN TUA.
VANCE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: RELIGIOUS GROUPS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE186079
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: REH
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780303-0482
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780727/aaaaawkq.tel
Line Count: 74
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 442bf96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 05 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1906199
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRAVEL TO MOSCOW OF BILLY GRAHAM CRUSADE REPRESENTATIVES
TAGS: SGEN, SHUM, OTRA, UR, US, (SMYTH, WALTER), (ARASCTI, ALEXANDER)
To: MOSCOW LENINGRAD
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/442bf96d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014